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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
7 October 1954

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Comment on Molotov's Speech at Berlin

The most significant part of Molotov's Berlin speech on 6 October was his statement that the USSR was ready to discuss "both the problems brought up earlier by the participants at the Berlin conference, as well as any new proposals which may be made on the problem of free all-German elections." He said, in connection with the failure of EDC, that new possibilities had arisen for four-power rapprochement on the question of free elections. Molotov obviously realizes that an appearance of flexibility on the question of elections is essential to make any Soviet proposal on Germany attractive to the West. By expressing Soviet willingness to discuss any proposal, he has carefully avoided a commitment to any formula actually guaranteeing free elections.

Molotov's proposal for the withdrawal of troops is explicitly a renewal of the proposal made at the Berlin conference, which included the right to retain limited contingents in Germany and to return troops there if security demanded it. Therefore, it contains nothing new.

Molotov endorsed the proposals, made repeatedly by the East Germans, for the establishment of all-German committees and the exchange of delegations. He followed the East Germans in appealing particularly to West German Social Democratic workers. He reiterated his Berlin conference suggestion for closer relations between Bonn and Moscow, particularly in the economic field.

Molotov repeated the recent Foreign Ministry statement that plans for including Germany in Western defense are incompatible with German unity and "will have dangerous consequences for peace in Europe." If these defense plans succeed "the German nation will remain partitioned for a long time to come."

These highlights of the speech, particularly the emphasis on free elections, and Molotov's choice of Berlin as the locale for his speech suggest it was aimed more specifically at West German opinion than at any other European country.

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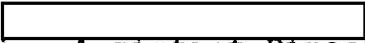
Molotov cited the Vyshinsky disarmament proposals as significant for the German problem, but warned that disarmament and German rearmament were incompatible. This has been a theme of recent propaganda and seemed directed primarily at Paris.

Molotov's proposals are apt to have an unsettling effect in the German Federal Republic, where the results of the London conference were not greeted with great enthusiasm. The suggestion for the immediate withdrawal of occupation forces from East and West Germany will have little appeal, but the expression of Soviet readiness to discuss free all-German elections comes close to the heart of the matter. Although this does not indicate Soviet willingness to agree to free elections, even as it stands it is ammunition for the growing number of West German politicians who think the time is ripe for renewed talks with Moscow.

Chancellor Adenauer will be firmly against taking the bait, but the opposition Social Democrats have been insisting on a new four-power exploration of the Soviet position even while the arrangements arrived at in London are being worked out. Moreover, the coalition Free Democratic chairman, Thomas Dehler, not only endorses this view, but is willing to see elections "not really free" in the Soviet Zone in the belief that a national German legislature would be sufficiently strong to "digest" any Communist members. Hence, a serious split in the Bonn Cabinet is possible over the Molotov proposals.

While the Soviet offer will increase the pressure in the French National Assembly to postpone any action on the London decisions until four-power talks have been held, it is likely that Premier Mendes-France will seek endorsement of these decisions now. The Premier, however, may have to accept a proviso that final action on German rearmament must await the outcome of talks with the Soviet Union.




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